

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO USMISSION USUN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3934

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 5507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, AS

SUBJECT: NEW AUSTRALIAN ITEM ON DIPLOMATIC ASYLUM

REF: USUN 2873

1. EMBASSY HAS NO PARTICULAR VIEWS ON MERITS OF UNGA ITEM ON "DIPLOMATIC ASYLUM" (REFTEL) AND DEFERS TO USUN ESTIMATE OF MISCHIEF INTRODUCTION OF SUCH ITEM MIGHT CREATE.

2. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT AUSTRALIAN MISSION OFFICER'S COMMENT THAT ORIGIN OF ITEM LAY IN CIRCUMSTANCE THAT "SOME BACK BENCHERS SAW THEIR CHILEAN FIRENDS BEING PUSHED AROUND AND THIS IS WHAT THEY'VE STUCK US WITH" IS SIGNIFICANTLY OUT OF FOCUS.

3. AT TIME OF OVERTHROW OF ALLENDE GOVERNMENT, PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM ISSUED PRESS STATEMENT EXPRESSING REGRET AT DEVELOPMENT, PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING HIMSELF "AS A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT" SYMPATHETIC WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLENDE REGIME. IN ADDRESS TO AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IN ADELAIDE JUNE 15 MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILLESEE MADE FOLLOWING
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COMMENT: "IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE MILITARY COUP IN CHILE,

WHEN LARGE NUMBERS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE WERE SEEKING ASYLUM IN SANTIAGO, I WAS VERY CONCERNED TO DISCOVER HOW OUTDATED AND TO MY MIND INADEQUATE WERE THE ARRANGEMENTS TO ALLEVIATE THE PLIGHT OF THE UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS OF THOSE EVENTS. BY 'ARRANGEMENTS' I DO NOT MEAN JUST THE PROCEDURES AUSTRALIA ITSELF HAD BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO FOLLOW, BUT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS WHICH GOVERNED THE ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONS SEEKING ASYLUM, ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAFE CONDUCT, AND SO ON...I THEREFORE HAD MY DEPARTMENT LOOK CLOSELY AT THE POSSIBILITY OF AUSTRALIA PROPOSING, ON A ARLD-WIDE BASIS, AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ASYLUM WHICH WOULD EMBODY MORE HUMAN PRINCIPLES OF ACTION ON THE PART OF COUNTRIES IN WHICH UPHEAVALS HAD OCCURRED AND BY STATES REPRESENTED BY MISSIONS IN THOSE COUNTRIES. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NEGOTIATION OF SUCH A REGIME WILL BE A DELICATE AND DIFFICULT MATTER AND WILL TAKE A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT. BUT I THINK THE EFFORT IS WORTH MAKING, AND I HOPE WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A START ON IT WHEN I GO TO THE NEXT UNITED NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK THREE MONTHS FROM NOW."

4. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF TENOR OF ABOVE STATEMENTS AND REMARKS, AS WELL AS FACT THAT PRIMIN WHITLAM AND SENATOR WILLESEE WILL BE ADDRESSING GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WE BELIEVE THIS IS A SERIOUS AUSTRALIAN EFFORT AND SHOULD BE SO REGARDED.
HARROP

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